

Spring Trail Ride set for May 16-17

Central Hills to host annual event

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

A Spring Trail Ride sponsored by the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) will take place May 16-17 at Central Hills Retreat near West.

"We have learned much since our first trail ride in the fall of 2012," said Don Lum, MBCB evangelism director. "We are looking forward to making this our best trail ride yet."

Lum said the Spring Trail Ride will utilize land purchased a few months ago and added to the Mississippi Baptist encampment's acreage. "It's the first time the new land will be used for a trail ride," he said.

Featured speakers will be Roy Hill and his son Chance, members of First Church in Satsuma, Al., who together head up Spurs Ministries (spursministries.org).

Participants should bring their own horses. An up-to-date Coggins test is required. Lum said a limited number of covered stalls are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Cost for the two-day event is \$50 per person and includes

To register

Contact Debbie Ramage at Central Hills Retreat. E-mail: dramage@mbcb.org. Telephone: (662) 289-9730. For more information, contact Lum at dum@mbcb.org. Telephone: (601) 292-3280.

overnight accommodations or recreational vehicle hookup, three meals, and insurance. For day riders who plan to participate on Saturday only, the cost is \$20 per person and includes lunch.

Lum said the previous three trail rides at Central Hills have included a number of people who came by themselves. "We've had several single participants. If your spouse doesn't ride or can't make the trip, that's no problem. Also, we've had grandparents bring grandchildren. If you enjoy riding, there's a place for you."

Participants may arrive any time on Friday and ride throughout the day on their own. Lum said. Dinner and evening activities will begin on Friday at 6 p.m.

see RIDE on p. 11



SPRING TRAIL RIDE

MAY 16 & 17, 2014

CENTRAL HILLS BAPTIST RETREAT

6377 Attala Road 4227

Vicksburg, MS 39192

Cost: \$50 per person

Includes: meals, accommodation, insurance, Coggins test

Day Riders: \$20

Includes: lunch

Saturday Riders: Cost: \$20

Includes: lunch

BYOH

(Bring Your Own Horse)

Up-to-date Coggins Required

Contact:

Jim Ray, CHBR - (662) 289-9730

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dum@mbcb.org

www.mbc.org

www.springtrailride.org

www.centralhillsretreat.org

Housing allowance decision challenged

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Three entities of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) have called for a federal appeals court to overturn a decision invalidating the ministerial housing allowance.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville and the International Mission Board (IMB) in Richmond, Va., signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief with a diversity of religious organizations in the important church-state case before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago.

The brief, filed April 9 by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C., urges the Seventh Circuit Court to reverse U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb's November 2013 opinion invalidating the portion of a 1954 federal law that allows clergy to exclude for federal income tax purposes a portion or all of their gross income as a housing allowance.

Crabb, a senior federal judge in the western district

see HOUSING on p. 9

Ukrainian Christians victims of anger, violence



STILL PRAYING — While the question of Russian domination hangs heavily across the country of Ukraine, more than 100 people usually crowd this busy intersection to pray in the eastern Ukrainian border city of Donetsk. The sign invites those passing by to "Pray here for Ukraine." (BP photo)

DONETSK, Ukraine (BP) — Christians gathering to pray near a political rally site in one of Ukraine's eastern cities have come under numerous attacks — even gunfire — from protesters.

Prayer tents have ministered to people in the midst of Ukraine's political revolution. Euromaidan protests began late last year when Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich backed away from a trade deal with the European Union in favor of accepting financial aid from Russia.

Euromaidan, the conflict's nickname, is Ukrainian for "Eurosquare."

In the city of Donetsk, Christians have persevered in the face of harassment and violence, said evangelical pastor Sergey

"We are standing on our knees. The only weapon that we have is prayer."

Sergey Kosyak
evangelical pastor

Kosyak, who along with others gathers to pray at a busy city intersection in Donetsk.

They have frequently faced opposition since erecting their prayer tent three months ago. Often it is the Ukrainian flag that flies above the tent that has provoked pro-Russian supporters to attack. It is not uncommon

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

21 weeks... and alive

Most students of American literature are familiar with the phrase, "The shot heard 'round the world," from the first stanza of Ralph Waldo Emerson's Concord Hymn, written in 1837. It originally referred to the beginning of the Revolutionary War and described how that rebellion changed the world, but over the years has come to symbolize any event that has the potential to turn the status quo upside down.

We have had at least one such shot in our generation that we should not allow to be forgotten. Several years ago, young Samuel Armas changed the abortion debate forever without uttering a word. He couldn't utter a word because he hadn't learned to talk. As a matter of fact, he hadn't even been born.

Samuel was 21 weeks from conception and still inside his mother's womb when surgeon Joseph Bruner and his surgical team at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville operated on him to correct a spinal birth defect known as spina bifida. Freelance photographer Michael Clancy was on assignment for USA Today and was in the operating room to record the surgery.

"I could see the uterus shake violently and then this little fist came out of the surgical opening," Clancy recalled at the time in an interview with FOXNews.com. "It came out under its own power. When Dr. Bruner lifted the little hand, I fired my camera and the tighter Samuel squeezed, the harder Dr. Bruner shook his hand." Clancy couldn't believe his eyes.

"It's just a miracle picture, a miracle moment," Clancy told FOXNews.com. "It shows the earliest human interaction ever recorded."

What he witnessed that day changed him from a staunch pro-choice advocate to a crusader for the pro-life cause. He now works as a motivational speaker at pro-life events, according to the FOXNews.com report, telling Samuel's story to rapt audiences.

"And that's what I'm going to do, keep telling this story," he told FOXNews.com. "It can change people's hearts. What started off as an assignment turned into a responsibility to keep telling the story behind it."

Many people who saw Samuel's photograph were equally moved. It proved, without a doubt, that developing babies are not blobs of tissue or "products of conception," the anti-intellectual argument pushed even today by abortion advocates. It was there for everyone to see — the fully-formed hand of a fully-formed human baby, just 21 weeks after conception.

Even though most of us don't know Samuel Armas and will never meet him face-to-face, it's hard to imagine a world without him. He seems to understand his place in history. "When I see that picture, the first thing I think of is how special and lucky I am to have God use me that way," Samuel told FOXNews.com. "I feel very thankful that I was in that picture."

We are too, Samuel. Would that everyone had eyes to see.



Should a church die?

Guest opinion

with Carl Savell



Westview Church in south Jackson will host a celebration service at 3 p.m. on April 27, to mark the passing of the church's property to Metro Association for the purpose of birthing many more churches until Jesus returns. Westview Church is giving whatever money we have in reserve to the Baptist Children's Village, for the purpose of helping to continue the ministry of reaching and caring for the precious children who need our care and our Savior.

Westview Church has ministered on the corner of Raymond and McDowell Roads for sixty years. I was called as pastor 15 years ago.

When I went to Woodville Heights Church in south Jackson in 1967, the large churches in south Jackson were Southern Baptist churches. This is no longer true because of the vast demographic changes in the area. Now the great churches are predominantly African-American.

A case in point is the former Woodville Heights Church, a Southern Baptist church which sold its property to Emmanuel Church, a predominantly African-American congregation. Under great leadership, Emmanuel is reaching the people of the community for Christ. Thus, Woodville Heights Church didn't die.

I have been thinking and praying about the question of, should a church die? After studying Matthew 16:13-28, Acts chapter two, and Acts 4:17-37, I suggest that the reasons a church should die are real. A church should die when:

- it is not being built by Jesus.
- the confession differs from, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16, KJV).
- there isn't room for Christ on the cross in the church's theology.
- what man wants comes before what God wants.
- following Jesus means something other than self-denial, taking up one's cross, and giving one's life for Christ.
- being His witness in the world means something other than doing it myself.
- rather than being filled with the Holy Spirit, the church does not preach the Word of God with boldness; the

congregation is scattered on the purpose of the church and agrees on very little; the people claim that anything belonging to them is their own; and there is no spiritual power in the church.

■ the church has no productive, positive witness for Christ.

■ there is a shortage of grace brought on by unfaithfulness.

■ there are no Barnabas examples in the church.

Considering those points, Westview Church does not qualify to be closed. Therefore we are not closing. Metro Association has graciously agreed to receive this gift from us to continue the development of churches and ministries for our Lord Jesus.

At the celebration service on April 27, we will celebrate what God has done and what God is going to do in the future to birth new ministries on the property.

If anyone says to you that Westview Church closed its doors, please inform them that the church does not qualify to be closed. Our Blessed Lord is going to expand His church through Westview Church.

There is so very much to do and time for the lost is running out. Let's get to the work. Praise God for all He has done, and will continue to do, through Westview Church.

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Baptist critics: Is 'Heaven is for Real,' for real?

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptists have mixed reviews of *Heaven is for Real*, a Sony Pictures movie released April 16 about a four-year-old boy who claimed he was transported to heaven as he underwent emergency surgery on earth.

Commentators said the movie, rated PG, presents opportunities for evangelism and consideration of the Bible's teaching on heaven, but they also warned that the film is theologically inaccurate and reveals Christians' propensity to trust fanciful accounts rather than rely on Scripture's teaching about heaven.

Prompting discussion

Taylor Worley, assistant professor of Christian thought and tradition at Baptist-affiliated Union University in Jackson, Tenn., told Baptist Press in a written statement that the film may prompt valuable discussion among Christians and non-Christians.

He has not seen the movie, which was produced on a \$12,000,000 budget, but said while all teaching on heaven should align with Scripture, he is hopeful that *Heaven is for Real* will help audiences ponder heavenly realities despite any doctrinal errors it may contain.

"No film will ever replace the foundation for belief that we have in God's Word and any attempt at fully representing the afterlife will certainly fall short, but that doesn't mean films shouldn't try to picture it for us," said Worley, who has written and lectured on movies.

"We need to have our imaginations stretched and expanded for the very reason that the Bible calls us to ponder heavenly realities (Philippians 4:8). We need to get a sense of wonder back about the eschatological [end times] kingdom of Christ. A film like *Heaven is for Real* could go a long way in helping us to get that wonder back."

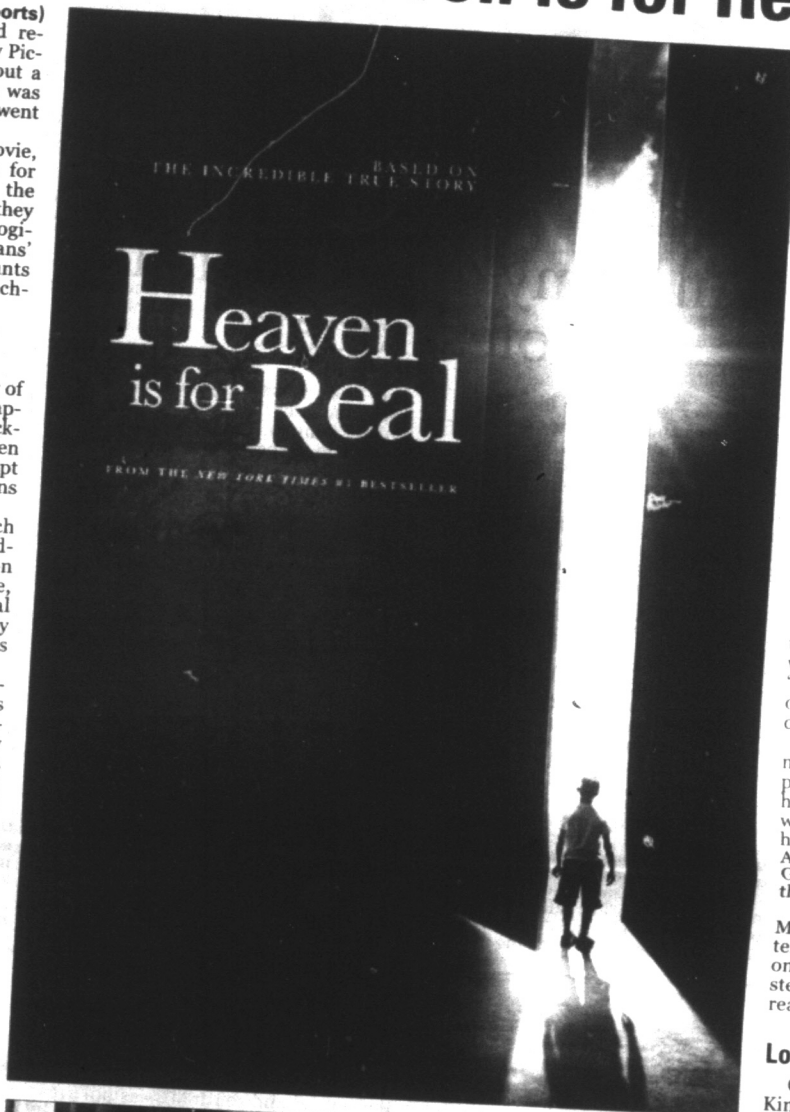
The movie, which boxofficemojo.com estimated has earned \$28,500,000 as of April 20, is based on a 2010 book with the same title that sold 10 million copies and rose to the top of the New York Times bestseller list. Written by Nebraska Wesleyan pastor Todd Burpo, the book tells how Burpo's son Colton had an emergency appendectomy and awoke from the operating table claiming he had been to heaven.

Initially his parents were skeptical but eventually believed his story.

In heaven, Colton claimed he sat on Jesus' lap, learned about a coming battle with Satan, saw Jesus sitting at the Father's right hand, and realized God is a Trinity. Among the book's assertions that some have called unscriptural: Colton said he received a halo and wings in heaven and met the Holy Spirit, who is "kind of blue."

The movie, a one hour and forty minute adaptation of the book, is co-written and directed by Randall Wallace (Braveheart, Secrecy) and stars Academy Award nominee Greg Kinnear (As Good As It Gets, Sabrina) as Todd Burpo. T.D. Jakes, pastor of The Potter's House non-denominational church in Dallas, is listed as a producer.

Worley said the film could "be immensely helpful when it comes to sharing the Gospel."



"Paul tells us in Romans chapter one that people avoid the hunch they have that God is real and even suppress the most important questions in life — questions like what happens to us after we die," he said. "If a film can cause a person to pause and more fully explore that question for at least an hour and a half, then we have a clear and viable entry point for sharing our hope in Christ."

Money to be made

Some Southern Baptists are skeptical about *Heaven is for Real*. David Platt,

QUESTIONS ABOUT HEAVEN — Greg Kinnear (left), portraying Todd Burpo, and Connor Corum, portraying Colton Burpo, perform in a scene from the movie, *Heaven is for Real*, released on April 16. Like other recently released religious-themed movies, *Heaven is for Real* has spurred debate on whether Christians should embrace it. (Special to The Baptist Record)

pastor of the Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, listed eight recent books in which people claim to have visited heaven or hell.

He said evangelicals' receptivity to such stories is troubling. "Make no mistake: there is money to be made in peddling fiction about the afterlife as nonfiction in the world of Christian publishing today," Platt said in a 2013 video that became popular on social media in advance of the movie's release.

Platt said it is "so disturbing... these books are published and then devoured by people who would describe themselves as born-again, Bible-

believing Christians, and all of that shows our level of discernment in the church today on this topic is extremely low because the whole premise behind every single one of these books is contrary to everything God's Word says about heaven."

Only four biblical authors had visions of heaven and wrote about what they saw: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, and John, Platt said, noting none of the visions was the result of a near-death experience and no one raised from the dead in the Bible told what he saw in heaven.

All the biblical descriptions of heaven are focused on God's glory and are a far cry from the popular books, he said. "Why are we buying this stuff when we have the Word of God? Let's minimize the thoughts of man... let's bank our lives and our understanding of the future on the truth of God."

Divine revelation supreme

Paul Mathenia, a lifelong Baptist pastor who now heads Discover Your Destiny ministry in Mountain Home, Ar., wrote in a Baptist Press column that "the cuteness, innocence, and honesty of four-year-olds" must "bow before the divine revelation of God's Word."

"On the one hand I am happy the movie is coming out. What a great opportunity to get people talking about heaven! Those who view the movie will be open to discussing its views of heaven compared to biblical teachings. A clear and accurate presentation of the Gospel can easily flow from this," Mathenia said.

"On the other hand I am saddened. Many people will succumb to the real temptation to base their view of heaven on the word of a four-year-old boy instead of the Word of God. This type of reaction has already followed the book."

Low view of Scripture

Greg Thornbury, president of The King's College in New York City and former Union University dean of theology and missions, wrote in a blog post about the book version of *Heaven is for Real* that he does not want to criticize Colton Burpo or his experience, but he is troubled that many evangelicals regard the account as "powerful evidence" for biblical Christianity.

Thornbury, who has taught courses on the philosophy of film making, said in a 2011 blog post that he is "bothered by the high regard and sheer enthusiasm many well-intentioned lay evangelicals are affording to Todd Burpo's book. Nor am I embarrassed by the discussion of evidence for the afterlife... What bothers me about the reception of *Heaven is for Real* is what it says about the relatively low view of the sufficiency of Scripture among evangelicals today."

"In other words, it's not good enough for us to hear about heaven from the holy apostles, Church Fathers, and trusted commentaries on Scripture. No, we need a little boy sitting on Jesus' lap to tell us that instead. Then we will believe it. And that phenomenon ultimately bodes ill for everyone who really does love the Bible: pastors, teachers, parents, and yes, even children."

April 23 is set aside on our calendars and across our country as Administrative Professionals Day. Years ago it started out as Secretary's Day and the name has morphed and shaped into other things more representative of what these wonderful people do. It is a day out of that entire week of days for a special recognition to be given to the support staff of organizations that do so much incredible work so well to keep organizations up to speed, informed, and in place. In our churches across the state there are hundreds of these fantastic people serving the Lord, caring for the church, helping pastors and staff members to be at their best and overall day-by-day making a difference in peoples' lives. The name changes over the years have been interesting as people try to change a title to raise the level of importance. Here in the Baptist Building and in some of our churches they refer to their folks as Ministry Assistants. That's a good thought because it is a reality, but I would simply point out that whatever you call them, it ought to be positive and it ought to be respectful of the enormous work they do and the efficiency with which they do it and the great spirit that they have in carrying out the task.

I could not even begin to think about doing the work they do. I would hate to think about having to do my job without their help. It would be impossible. In the Executive Director's office here at the Convention, a transition has taken place over these last few months as Brenda Box concluded her ministry at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board of 35 years and 3 months. She was the Executive Assistant to Dr. Earl Kelly, Dr. Bill Causey, and for 15 years while I have been here. She received a higher calling and an even greater work to leave her responsibilities here and focus on some needs that were calling her at home and church and personally, including the grand task of grandmothering. Following her as my Ministry Assistant is Maria Teel. She comes to the Convention after



An Army of Wonderful Professionals

serving over 10 years with Blue Mountain College and she is doing a magnificent job in this transition.

Through my years as a pastor and the years here at the Convention I would be so limited and probably most of the time just stymied without the help of incredible secretaries and ministry assistants. But it's not just a personal thing, it's really a Kingdom thing because many of our churches recognize the wonderful service and the incredible work these ladies and a few men in these positions do. They are so valuable. I remember once as I had moved to a new church to begin a pastorate I was at the church on Saturday morning putting some books in the shelves and trying to get my office straightened up. We had just moved in. The phone rang. I picked up the receiver and said the name of the church. The person on the other end asked if the church secretary was there. I said, "No, this is Saturday and she's off on Saturday." The caller asked for a particular staff member. I said, "No, I'm sorry he's not here either." The caller named one other person and I said, "I'm sorry. He's not here either." To which the caller

said, "Well, is there anybody there that knows anything?" To which I answered, "I don't think so. I'm the only person here. I am the new pastor beginning tomorrow and I do not know anything." I hate to confess, but that was the condition I was in most of the time. But not these incredible, gifted people. They know times and places, people, connections, families and faces. They know where things are and how to get things done. They indeed are assistants beyond any description that might be given.

Here in Mississippi and in our Baptist churches there are people across our state that fill these amazing roles day after day. One lady that may have served a church longer than anyone is Ms. D'Alice Ledingham. For 55 years Ms. D has been at the task there at Griffith Memorial Baptist Church. What did she do all these years? Oh, a thousand things — most of which are not in a job description. For instance, she served on several committees including the Hospitality Committee, Flower Committee and Lord's Supper Committee. She served as the church historian, church treasurer, kitchen worker during Vacation Bible

School and as the directory assistance operator for church members. She served as the Sunday School secretary, a youth worker, and a missions volunteer. She knows where every book, letter and manual is stored.

Can you imagine the hundreds of thousands of times Ms. D answered the phone at the church office? Can you imagine the mental and emotional flexibility that is required to work with ten different pastors and numerous music ministers and youth ministers over that period of time? Can you even think about processing all of the things that are involved in a death and preparations for a funeral and the contacts that need to be made and getting information out? Or, preparation for a wedding, to say nothing of the day to day, week to week, Sunday by Sunday preparation for services, publication of bulletins and letters and help to get things set up for this banquet or that luncheon or this class meeting. If someone would call Griffith Memorial Baptist Church and ask if there is anyone there that knows anything, if she was there, she knew everything. Ms. D, our hats are off to you and our hearts reach out to you in thanksgiving and praise and appreciation for being one of the fine professional assistants in our Mississippi Baptist churches. You have honored the Lord. You have blessed His church. You have been wonderful to the pastors and you have blessed my life.

What can you do to bless one of these professional assistants' lives? Well, if you know one of these folks, take time to do something. Call them and thank them. Write a note. Give them some flowers. Buy some candy. Give them a gift card. Bake a cake or some cookies or a pie. Let them know you are praying for them. Help them get a half a day off. Do something. You will not only be a blessing, you will be blessed.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Staff Changes

In other Staff News:

► **Brian E. Ward**, ordained minister with a degree in Pastoral Studies, is seeking ministry opportunities in the central and south Mississippi areas. He may be contacted at (601) 847-5859.

(TOP) MAIN STREET CHURCH, HATTIESBURG,

has called **Joey Brent** as senior pastor, effective Apr. 1. He is a native of McComb, and is married to Brandon native **Kathy Jennings Brent**. They have two grown children, **Lindsey** and **Preston**. He holds degrees from Southwestern Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary. The Brents served six and a half years with the International Mission Board in Southeast Asia, and churches in South Carolina, Missouri, Alabama, Florida, Texas, and Illinois.



(BOTTOM) RICHBURG CHURCH, HATTIESBURG,

has called **J. Stephen Miller** as minister of youth.



FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, has called **Tim Johnson** as music minister and youth pastor effective Apr. 6. Shown are Johnson and his wife **Tammy**.

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2014 Legislative Wrap

The 2014 legislative session is now history. Our elected officials completed their work early, and we all rejoiced knowing they would be home for Easter. As with all sessions, there were positives and negatives along with lots and lots of politics. The Christian Action Commission was actively involved in monitoring several pieces of legislation, a few of which I will discuss.

Two of these bills were HB 585 and HB 1030. HB 585 is a bill that will make significant changes in our prison and criminal justice systems. The second bill is HB 1030. This bill's purpose was designed to make it easier for Domestic Violence Centers to acquire support and to meet the needs of their clients. Abuse is more common than most think. More cases are being reported, but there are hundreds not being reported. These centers deserve all the assistance they can get.

Mississippi joined nine other states in passing a law (HB 1400) in banning abortions at or after 20 weeks gestational age. The attending physician must determine the probable gestational age of an unborn child before an abortion can be performed.

Strong leadership in the Senate and the House worked together for this bill to pass. It went to conference where three members of the House and three from the Senate worked together to ensure a good bill.

The Senate conferees were Dean Kirby, Joey Fillingane, and Gray Tollison. The House conferees were Becky Currie, Patricia Willis and Andy Gipson. Please thank them for their efforts along with all those who voted for this bill.

There are some things you learn by sitting in the gallery and watching the floor debate on bills like the abortion ban after 20 weeks. I was privileged to sit on the House side as they debated this bill. Three legislators, Representatives Cecil Brown, Bobby Moak, and David Baria tried to kill this bill as it was coming up for a vote. Rep. Cecil Brown of Hinds County, voted for the bill after speaking against the bill. Rep. Bobby Moak of Lincoln County, who fought passage of HB 1400 voted AGAINST the bill originally and then changed his vote to PRESENT, which meant he did not want to go on record either way. Also, Rep. David Baria



with Jimmy Porter

did his best to defeat the bill and then voted PRESENT, like Rep. Moak. It is possible all three will tell you they are pro-life, but their actions during floor debate say otherwise. These gentlemen have a right to their views just as their constituents have the right to know what those views are as they prepare to vote next year.

The final bill for discussion is SB 2681. The Mississippi Religious Freedom Restoration Act. RFRA, as it is called, is modeled after the Federal RFRA, which was signed into law in 1993. SB 2681 dictates that the actions of state and local government shall not substantially burden a person's right to the exercise of religion. Also in this bill was

the mandate to add "In God We Trust" to the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi.

The homosexual community, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Human Rights Campaign and others, viciously attacked this bill. Without the leadership of Speaker Philip Gunn of the House of Representatives and Lt. Governor Tate Reeves of the Senate this bill would have died. Six conferees withstood the pressure and brought 2681 to the floor of the Senate and House to be voted on. They were John Polk, Philip Gandy, and Joey Fillingane of the Senate and Andy Gipson, Joey Hood, and Alex Monsour of the House. The religious community is indebted to all these gentlemen. We all thank you.

On SB 2681 I was privileged to sit in the Senate gallery and watch the debate. Senators Hob Bryan of Amory, Kenneth Wayne Jones of Canton, and Derrick Simmons of Greenville were the primary opponents of this bill. Senators Jones and Simmons attempted to make it a race issue claiming discrimination. When asked to cite where in the bill it discriminated—they couldn't. As far as Senator

Hob Bryan, I am still trying to understand what his objections were, other than his strong public disparaging remarks about the Christian Action Commission and our support for this bill.

I encourage you to go to www.christianaction.com and click on "legislation" and see how your Senator and Representative voted on HB 1400 and SB 2681. You might want them to explain their votes on these issues. We have many strong Christians who come to the Capitol every year and do their best. One example is Representative Deborah Butler Dixon. She represents Hinds County and is African American. Mrs. Dixon voted for RFRA and HB 1400 when the majority of the Democrats and members of the Black Caucus voted against these bills. Our responsibility is to support them in prayer and by going to the polls and voting to keep them in office.

That, my friends, is "a wrap."

Porter serves as executive director-treasurer for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3332 or jporter@christianaction.com.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

RCM FOYWY YRGM WCXV BGZ, PVIOY

BRUO BVEOY, RCM LGSMY VP XBO RGS

BRUO COYXY; LWX XBO YVC VP ZRC

BRXB CVX KBOSO XV ERT BGY BORM.

EWDO CGCO: PGPXT-OGQBX

Clue: P = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 5:31

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

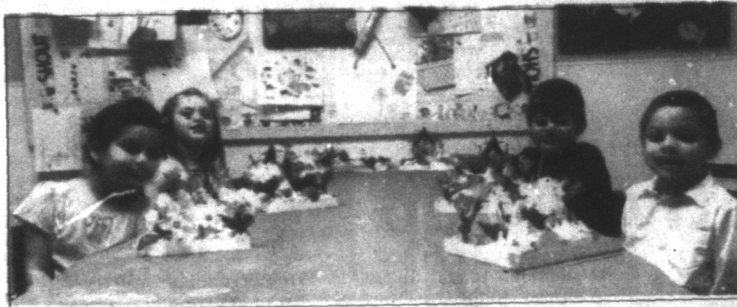
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There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Just for the Record



THE 4- AND 5-YEAR-OLD CLASS OF CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG, portrayed the Easter scene remembering Jesus' death on the cross and the empty tomb.



FIRST CHURCH, ABERDEEN, recently honored two long-time deacons with the title of deacon emeritus. Shown with their spouses are Harold Long and Gene White, with pastors Chris Thomas and Dave Dowdy.



PARKWAY CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO, recently ordained Erik Frazure as deacon. Shown are Derrick Wilson, Zeke Frazure, Frazure, Eli Frazure, Ezra Frazure, and Patty Frazure.



BEULAH CHURCH, MYRTLE, ordained Mitchell Hall to the ministry. He will serve as associate pastor of North Side Church, New Albany. Shown with Hall are his son Corey, Marty Merritt, and Terry Rodgers.



CALVARY CHURCH, SMITHDALE, held a children's Easter celebration.



The youth of **NEW BETHEL CHURCH, GRENADA,** attended a showing of God's Not Dead Apr. 13.



The children's choir and youth choir of **PLEASANT GROVE CHURCH, LAUREL,** presented the Easter musical drama All Because of Jesus Palm Sunday at 6 p.m.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Bethesda Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, Apr. 27, 10:30 a.m.; Kermit Sharpe, speaker; Billy James, pastor.
 ► **Neshoba Church, Union:** Revival, Apr. 27 - May 1; Sun., pre-service music, 10:45 a.m.; service, 11 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:45; Randall Creel, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.
 ► **First Church, Mt. Olive:** Spring renewal, Apr. 27 - 30; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Mark Mayfield, speaker; Nolan Bishop Family Band, music.
 ► **Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Apr. 27; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; special music featuring Revelation, 10:15 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Clarence Young, speaker.
 ► **Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian:** Revival, Apr. 27 - May 1; Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Thurs., 6:30 p.m.; special service Thursday with a scale model of Noah's Ark from Jesus Christ Creation Crusaders, Tallawampa Church; Leon

Ross, speaker; C. W. McElroy, Sr. and Buddy McElroy, music.
 ► **First Church, Calhoun City:** Revival, Apr. 27 - 30; services, 6 p.m.; Rex Yancey, speaker; Terrell Jackson, music; Mike Smith, pastor.
 ► **Liberty Church, Carroll County:** Revival, Apr. 27 - 30; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Eddie Carpenter, speaker; Bennie Rigby, music.
 ► **Rocky Point Church, Carthage:** Revival, Apr. 27 - 30; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. nightly; Jason Jones, speaker; Jennifer Sherman, music; Shane McGivney, pastor.
 ► **Oak Grove Church, Smith County:** Revival and homecoming, Apr. 27 - 30; Sun., 10 a.m. high attendance day; worship 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Buddy Keyes, speaker; Monty Bounds, music.
 ► **Philadelphia Church, Etta:** Homecoming, Apr. 27, 10 a.m., followed by dinner; Paid in Full, music.

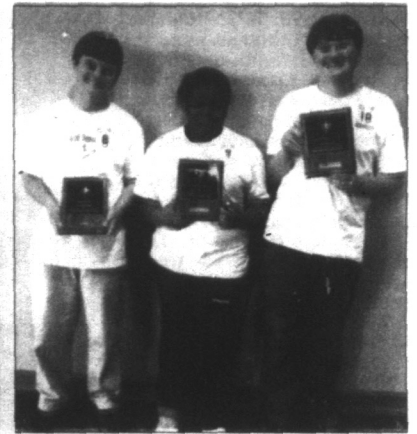
Bible Drill



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, recognizes Bible drillers Georganna Allen, Kara Beth Crosby, and Carrie Pyeatt. Pam Hatten, leader; Hal Hatten, pastor.



ENON CHURCH, TRI-COUNTY ASSOCIATION, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown is (top row) Hannah Rand, C.J. Stauffer, Evan McEwen and leader Rochelle Boyd; (bottom row) leader Melissa Stauffer, Samantha Stauffer, Madajah Walker and leader Patricia Boyd.




COVENANT CHURCH, GEORGE-GREEN ASSOCIATION, recognizes its youth drillers Aleshia Washington (center), Mason McLain and Carey McLain.



LAKE WASHINGTON FIRST CHURCH, GLEN ALLAN, recognizes Bible drillers Jenna McLendon, Linden Dinkens, Kate McLendon, Libby Sharpe, Banks Dinkins, Mary Carol Sharpe, Emma Sharpe, John Davis Sharpe, and leader Gail Wilkins.



MT. ZION CHURCH, FLORENCE, recognizes Bible drillers Lizzie Williams, Amy Granthan, Jessie Broadwater, Beatty Sanders and Jasmin Scoggins.



**MISSISSIPPI WMU SEEKING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-TREASURER**

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES
The Executive Director-Treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union is responsible for promoting, planning, conducting and evaluating the missions mobilization, missions awareness, missions education, missions support and missions involvement among women, youth, girls, preschoolers and co-ed groups in Mississippi Baptist churches and associations throughout the state.

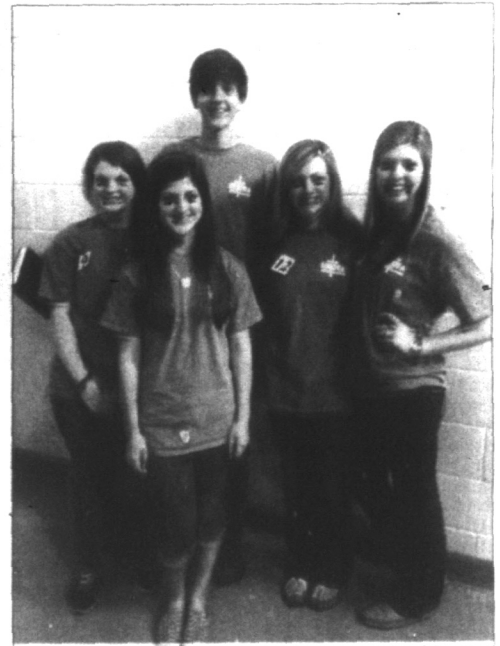
SPECIFICATIONS
Education: College: 4 years; Seminary: 2 to 3 years
Experience: Church/Denomination: 5 to 10 years

RESUMES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
WMU Search Committee, Marion D. Duncan, Chairman,
277 Cambridge Drive, Starkville, MS 39759

RESUMES WILL BE RECEIVED UNTIL APRIL 30, 2014



FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA, recognizes children's driller Hannah Carson; and youth drillers Madeline Mixon, Rachel Gray, Parker Blaylock, Micah Gray, and Greer Blaylock.



Adapting to culture leads to successful church starts

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — It took trips to three different stores, an all-day wait for the dough to rise, and clever planning to use the electric oven despite the daily power outages, but Reece and Justina Dehn (names changed) knew it was all worth it when they watched a tiny Nepalese grandmother eat her first slice of pizza.

The woman scraped off the cheese topping and ate that part first. Then she scooped up the tomato sauce and ate it. Lastly, she finished off the crust, leaving nothing on the plate.

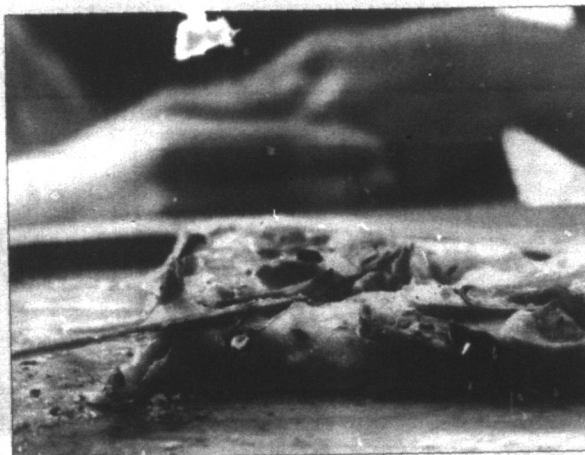
When Justina served homemade orange sherbet, the grandmother downed two full bowls.

"America Day," when the Christian couple invited some Nepalese friends to their home to eat American food, had been a success. Living in Nepal has shown the Dehns the significance of building relationships and showing hospitality to those around them.

"We drink a lot of tea and visit a lot of homes," Justina says with a laugh.

Sometimes friends invite them over. Sometimes they are invited by people they meet while walking along the street.

Often the Dehns wait in a



TASTE OF HOME — "America Day," when Reece and Justina Dehn (names changed) invite close friends to their home in Nepal to sample American food, has proven to be a success. The Dehns use America Day to build relationships in ways that are appropriate in the Nepalese culture. (IMB file photo)

room by themselves while their hosts head to the market to purchase tea and cookies. In Nepal, guests can never leave a house until they've had something to drink and something to eat.

"In the beginning they will never partake with you, because you're the honored

guest," Reece says, "so if we get invited for tea or a meal, we sit and eat and they sit and watch."

After a relationship has developed, it's different, the Dehns say. "When we go to their house it's like family. We all sit down and eat together. It's really cool. It really touches your heart."

"When we go to their house it's like family. We all sit down and eat together. It's really cool. It really touches your heart."

Reece and Justina Dehn missionaries

Their hosts sometimes offer them black tea with milk, sometimes spiced with delicious cinnamon and cardamom. Other times they offer black tea sprinkled with pepper. Another type of tea is made from a leaf that tastes like ocean water, but that's not the Dehns' favorite.

Spending time with these gracious, soft-spoken people of Nepal has allowed the Dehns to build lasting relationships, but sometimes it's not so easy.

On one occasion, the Dehns took their family to visit a local church planter's home village. The villagers refused to look them in the eye. No one offered tea. Normally hospitable people seemed hostile and strange.

The Dehns began to pray.

They decided to return with a team of volunteers to prayer-walk through the village. The morning of the trip, everything seemed to go wrong. They encountered a variety of distractions. A couple of unexpected obstacles included their young daughter falling and cutting her lip, and every toilet in the house breaking down at once.

Despite feeling heavy in spirit, the family and four American volunteers went to the village, planning to walk and pray for an open door. Instead, as soon as they arrived, dozens of men and women appeared, eager to talk to them — a complete change from the earlier visit.

The Dehns and others explained Bible stories, talked with children, eventually led six people to Christ, and started a new church. They later drank tea with the new believers.

The family often travels to spend the night with local believers in the villages, walking beside them and spending one-on-one time with them. Reece trains a small group of about 11 believers to go out and work with their own people, to disciple new believers and start strong, healthy churches.

"Our heart is in South Asia," Justina says.

So. Baptists represented at White House meeting

WASHINGTON (BP) — Russell D. Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville, and other religious leaders met April 15 in the Oval Office with U.S. President Barack Obama to discuss the continuing effort to pass immigration reform this year.

"I disagree with the President on some serious issues of human life, marriage, and religious liberty," Moore said in a written statement after the meeting, "but this is one issue where the country isn't divided up into red and blue."

"I don't know anyone who thinks the status quo immigration policy is working," Moore said in the statement released by the Evangelical Immigration Table, a group of religious leaders advocating for immigration reform consistent with biblical values. "Our border isn't secure, we don't know who is and who isn't in the country, and we have families torn apart by an incoherent and capricious system."

He reminded the president of their differences during the meeting, Moore said. Obama joked, "You don't have to list them all," Moore said later.

"Though I have all sorts of disagreements with the president, I think we should express those disagreements while at

the same time working to honor and pray for him as our nation's leader, as Scripture calls us to do, and working together where we can for the good of the nation," Moore told Baptist Press.

Moore said he encouraged Obama "to work with Republicans to get beyond partisan bickering and fix this broken system."

The president and a House Republican leader clashed, however, over immigration reform the next day. In a statement released April 16, Obama pointed to the failure of the GOP majority in the House to act, saying Republicans are "seemingly preferring the status quo of a broken immigration system over meaningful reform."

The House majority leader, Republican Rep. Eric Cantor of Virginia, reacted sharply in a written release, describing the president's statement as an attack "which indicated no sincere desire to work together."

The Senate passed broad reform legislation last year, but the ERLC has said it needs changing. So far, House committees have approved bills dealing with such matters as strengthening border and national security, providing visas for guest workers and requiring employers to use the E-Verify

system to check employees' eligibility. The full House has yet to pass those bills, however.

The ERLC and other evangelical organizations have called for reform that would provide border and workplace security, uphold the rule of law and respect family unity. The ERLC and other evangelicals also want laws to establish a path to legal status and citizenship to those who want to live in this country permanently and are willing to pay penalties and meet certain requirements.

Moore's meeting with Obama occurred while his administration is studying its deportation processes for illegal immigrants, in the face of allegations those methods are harming Hispanic families, according to The Wall Street Journal.

After the meeting, religious leaders told the president "about the impact the failure to fix the immigration system has on families in their congregations and communities," the White House reported. Obama voiced "deep concern" for the pain many families are experiencing from being separated, according to the White House.

Other religious leaders attending the meeting were Noel Castellanos, chief executive officer of the Christian Com-

munity Development Association; Luis Cortes, president of Esperanza; JoAnne Lyon, general superintendent of the Wesleyan Church; Suzi Paynter, executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; and Dieter Uchtdorf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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**WESTVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH
SERVICE OF CELEBRATION**

APRIL 27TH • 3:00 P. M.

Westview Baptist Church, Jackson, will be donating their property to the Metro Baptist Association for the purpose of birthing many more churches until Jesus returns. Remaining funds will be donated to The Baptist Children's Village. Everyone is invited to come and share food and fellowship after the service.

UKRAINE

cont. from p. 1

for people to throw eggs, rocks, bottles, and large cement pieces at the tent.

Earlier this week, two men wearing gas masks and military helmets and carrying clubs forcibly removed the group's flags. "The Ukrainian flag they threw into the river," Kosyak said, "and the flag of the Donetsk region they kept to take with them."

As the men reached the middle of a nearby bridge, a car pulled alongside them. "Two guys got out very professionally and in a few seconds our offenders were pounded down like

otbivne [Ukraine's version of schnitzel]," Kosyak said. "They brought us one of the flags and apologized that it was smeared with blood. Then they left."

Then two men from the prayer team approached the men who had attacked the tent. "Their faces were all covered in blood with broken noses," Kosyak said. "Our men brought them to the tent where they gave them first aid. They washed them, prayed for them, and handed them New Testaments."

Regardless of what happens, Kosyak said, his group will continue to pray each day for the city and for Ukraine.

One evening following their time of prayer, the group was

harassed by rioters. One young family was able to escape in their car, but not before someone began shooting at them with a pistol. Shots broke the windows of the car and one bullet lodged in the body of the car.

The next day, Kosyak asked the family how they felt in the aftermath of the attack. "They told me, 'We will be there tomorrow to pray,'" he said, "and they came back here the next evening with their 17-year-old daughter. That event did not stop them from coming."

In cities across Ukraine, similar prayer tents have been erected but most have not fallen victim to attacks from political demonstrators.

Evangelicals erected a prayer

tent in Kiev's Independence Square, where they gather each day to pray and distribute Bibles and other Christian literature. Volunteers have been operating that tent daily for more than three months now.

"Our tent is still here," said Victor Gutsalo, a retired Ukrainian army officer who comes to the square each day. "The fires burned all around us [during the Euromaidan demonstrations], but the tent was unharmed. God's hand of protection has been on us."

In the eastern border city of Kharkiv, believers gather each morning to pray in the city's central square, which also features one of the largest statues of Lenin in Europe. The group

said they have not been victims of harassment during their prayer meetings.

"We were asked to move from one part of the square to another," said Joy Burnett (not her real name), a Christian worker in Kharkiv. "They [government officials] realized that we were here to pray and not to protest. So they asked us to move away from where protesters usually gather."

Back in Donetsk, Kosyak said church leaders have discussed making their place on the street corner a regular place of prayer, even after the political crisis is over.

"We are standing on our knees," he said. "The only weapon that we have is prayer."

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MS POSITIONS

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, MCCOMB, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTRY ASSISTANT/SECRETARY. Resumes can be mailed to the church at: 1046 Friendship Cir., McComb, MS 39648, or e-mailed to the church at: friendshipbc815@bellsouth.net.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BROOKLYN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A YEAR ROUND BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Please email cover letter, resume and reference list to allen@afloverslaw.net.

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBUS, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME (25 HOUR WORK WEEK) MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Please e-mail resume to office@mbzbaptist.com or mail to: Mt Zion Baptist Church, 1791 Lake Lowndes Road, Columbus, MS 39702

ENTERPRISE BAPTIST CHURCH (CLARKE COUNTY) IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS/RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF SUMMER STUDENT MINISTER (mid-May through mid-August). Email resumes to enterprisebaptist@att.net or mail to Enterprise Baptist Church, PO Box 186, Enterprise, MS 39330

HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PIANIST to play for morning and evening worship and weekly choir rehearsal. Will work closely with Pastor and Worship Leader to plan worship services. Email resumes to mailto:hebronbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Hebron Baptist, 4795 Virville Causeway Rd., Meridian, MS 39301

LEMOYNE BOULEVARD BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING PERMANENT PASTOR. Please send resumes to: LBBC Pastor Search Committee, 15005 Lemoine Blvd, Biloxi, MS 39532

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EUPORA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND ASSOCIATE PASTOR. Learn more about the ministries of FBC Eupora at www.fbcupora.com. Please send your resume to FBC Eupora, ATTN: Minister of Music Committee, P.O. Box 268, Eupora, MS 39744.

LONGVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH (PONTOTOC COUNTY) PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR: Please send resumes to Longview Baptist Church c/o Pastor Search Committee 406 Dozier Hill Rd Belden, MS 38826.

SCOTLAND BAPTIST CHURCH, WINONA, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please e-mail resumes to hswaller@gmail.com or call 662-417-0869 for more information.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, MCCOMB, IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER. This person should be able to hold on to traditional elements of worship while moving to a more contemporary style. Please send resumes to cbccmccomb@yahoo.com

NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH IN BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR/PREACHER. Please send resume to New Sight Baptist Church, 629 Forest Tr., Brookhaven, MS 39601 or email to rmax80@hotmail.com or fax resume to 601-833-0791

HOUSING

cont. from p. 1

of Wisconsin, was appointed to the federal bench by U.S. President Jimmy Carter in 1979.

GuideStone Financial Resources, the SBC's financial and health benefits entity headquartered in Dallas, also signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the housing allowance. It joined with other denominational benefit boards as part of the Church Alliance, which filed its brief April 10.

In a statement for Baptist Press, ERLC President Russell D. Moore said he is "glad to stand with our allies at the Becket Fund in defending the fair and just ministerial exemption. The ministerial housing allowance is not a government grant but an equitable recognition of the unique situation of clergy."

GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins told BP in a statement, "GuideStone has long recognized the vital role" of

"The ministerial housing allowance is not a government grant but an equitable recognition of the unique situation of clergy."

Russell D. Moore

ERLC President

the housing allowance.

Under the federal income tax system, some housing costs are primarily for "the convenience of the employer," not the employee. As a result, such costs are not considered income. Among those who receive such benefits, in addition to ministers, are members of the military, workers living overseas and employees of educational institutions.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), based in Madison, Wis., sued the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regarding the housing allowance.

The allowance has been especially helpful to smaller congregations, because their pastors or ministers — who typically receive lower sala-

ries — benefit from part of their income being non-taxable. A 2002 estimate offered by then-Rep. Jim Ramstad of Minnesota said the housing allowance would save ministers \$2.3 billion in taxes during the following five years.

Crabb's decision came as no surprise. In 2010, she ruled the National Day of Prayer violates the establishment clause. A three-judge panel of the Seventh Circuit Court unanimously struck down Crabb's ruling the following year. The appeals court ruled FFRF did not have standing to bring the lawsuit.

The case is *FFRF v. Lew and Koskinen*. Jacob Lew is secretary of the Treasury, and John Koskinen is commissioner of the IRS.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 2013

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Mr. & Mrs. James A. Alford
Mr. Joe Mills
Mr. & Mrs. Lamar Hunter
Mr. Earl Millsaps
Jerry, Josie & Joe Keeton
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry L. Ivey
Mrs. Dianne Luckett Mitchell
Dr. Rebecca Sue Wilkie
Rev. Bill and Betty Mitchell
JoAnn & Winfred Johnston
Malcolm and Velma Moak
M. M. Moak Tree Farm
Mr. Francis Moody
Ruth SSC, Juniper Grove BC
Mr. Charles and Ronnie Murphree
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox
John Luke Murray
Mrs. Sue Hamilton
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy W. Hardy
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry
Ramona Napp
Ms. Carolyn Palmer
Mr. "Petie" Neely
Ms. Dian Smith
Mr. Paul Newman
Mr. & Mrs. Greg L. Wilkinson
Mr. Rickey Newman
Mr. & Mrs. Greg L. Wilkinson
Mr. & Mrs. Troy N. Alford
Charles Nowell
Mary Malone
Bradford Chapel BC
Tom Oakes
Eddie & Janelle M. Cook
Mr. Terry Overstreet
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mrs. Ruth Pace
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Melton
Casey Page
Byron & Nell Dean
Mr. J. V. Parker
Mr. Michael W. Parker
Mrs. Kathy Parker
Mr. Russell Barnett
Perley Parr
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Walker
Mr. & Mrs. E. M. Parsons
Mr. & Mrs. E. C. Parsons
Mr. Mike Parsons
Mr. & Mrs. E. C. Parsons
Charles Patterson
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Garrett
Mr. Donald Patterson
Ms. Twila Rawson
Audrey Perkins
Mr. & Mrs. B. A. Anders
Mrs. Martha Dean Perkins
Mr. & Mrs. Greg L. Wilkinson
Robbie Beall Petty
Mr. George Ferris Petty
Pep Pettit
Mary Malone
Bradford Chapel BC
Mrs. Sherrill Petty
Mr. & Mrs. Walter A. McCool

SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

APRIL 29, 2014

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

MORRISON HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH
CLINTON, MS

The Baptist Children's Village has partnered with the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and Morrison Heights Baptist Church to provide SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING to help reduce the risk of child abuse in your communities.

Morrison Heights
Baptist Church
A Family of Hope

Christian Action
Commission

Event is free, but registration is required.
For more information call (601) 952-2422
or visit www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

Avoid Alcohol and Drug Abuse • Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21, 29-35; 31:4-7

The debate over whether the Bible declares that the use of alcohol is prohibited is one that will probably go on forever. The Bible does not call for total abstinence from the use of alcohol. What the Bible does give us is numerous warnings about how the use of alcohol may affect our lives, the people we love, and our witness for Christ. Paul warned us that anything that causes a brother to stumble should be avoided. (Romans 14:21) The warning from Proverbs is for us not to discount the power that Satan can exercise over us through the abuse of alcohol and harmful drugs. I have witnessed, in my own family, the destructive power of alcohol use. There are emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental scars that are caused by the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Because the Bible is very strong in its warnings about the influence alcohol abuse can have in our lives, I believe total abstinence is the best application of Godly wisdom.

Alcohol's Deceptive Power (Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21)

While the Bible does not explicitly prohibit the use of alcohol, it does condemn drunkenness. Even the society we live in looks on drunkenness as a social abomination. Through daily media we are exposed to the social acceptance of socialized drinking, but you may have noticed that they never show people in

a drunken stupor, sick from all the alcohol they have consumed. The deception of drug and alcohol use is that it makes you more socially acceptable, but the reality is that its end is social exclusion. Your decision-making abilities and your ability to think clearly are dulled by the effects of alcohol and drug use. Through that process you make unwise choices that lead your life down a path of poverty. (Prov. 23:19-21) I believe the "poverty"

Proverbs is warning us about not only a possible financial poverty, but a spiritual, social, and mental poverty as well.



Explore the Bible with Huey Dedmon

Alcohol's Destructive Power (Proverbs 23:29-30)

I do not think that any of us would try to dispute the destructive power of alcohol and drug abuse. Most people I know have been affected in some way through family or friends with issues related to the abuse of these substances. Life has many ups and downs, and the destructive power of these substances only adds more downs. I have watched many peo-

ple being taken in by the power of alcohol abuse. Their lives wind up in divorce, financial chaos, physical suffering, and even death. A person who chooses to live a Godly life of wisdom is choosing not to subject themselves, their families, and their friends to the destructive powers of alcohol and drug abuse.

Alcohol's Addictive Power (Proverbs 23:31-35)

My mom was one of the sweetest people I have ever known until she became addicted to alcohol. As a child, I witnessed first-hand

how her addiction changed her sweet nature. At first she would only drink occasionally, and then it became more frequent. Before long it was almost every day. She did and said things she would have never done if she were sober. I watched as she lived out Proverbs 23:33 because of her addiction. But praise God, I also witnessed the day when she, with God's help, threw off the chains of alcoholism and was my sweet mom again.

The saddest thing is that her addiction caused physical complications that added to a shorter life than she should have lived. Proverbs is admonishing us to wise up before we are overtaken by the addictive power of alcohol or drugs.

Alcohol's Distractive Power (Proverbs 31:4-5)

Another power that alcohol and drug abuse has is its distractive power. During its use we forget where we are supposed to be. We are distracted from fulfilling financial, work and family responsibilities. We are also distracted from fulfilling our ministry as a child of God. Our witness is hampered or even destroyed, and we distract people away from their opportunity to accept Jesus as their Savior.

Alcohol's Use as a Sedative (Proverbs 31:6-7)

The use of alcohol for medical purposes has been a part of our society since its discovery. Even the Bible gives us references for its use. (Prov. 31:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:23) While alcohol has qualities as a sedative, much better alternatives are available today. The application of Godly wisdom teaches us to be aware of how its abuse can affect our lives.

Dedmon is Associate Pastor for Education and Outreach, Brandon Church, Brandon.

Hope Found • Matthew 8:1-13

Sunday before last, we rejoiced in hope at the picture of physically crippled and wounded Mephibosheth dining in Jerusalem at the table of King David. Whosoever will bow in true humility will be fully restored. Thanks to the fulfillment of covenant promises, despair was busted.

Last Sunday, we rejoiced in the eternal promise that even though we are spiritually crippled and wounded, we are offered the opportunity to dine in the New Jerusalem at the table of Jesus, The King OF David. Whosoever will stand at the empty tomb in complete surrender will be fully redeemed. Thanks to the power of the resurrection, death was dusted.

In our lesson for this coming Sunday, we return to our theme of hope. In the gospel of Matthew, we are introduced to a man with leprosy and a Roman military officer with a servant who needed a healing touch. Both of these men found hope, help and healing by seeking an audience with Jesus. Hope is the reward for those who find their treasure in Christ.

Chapter 8 of Matthew begins with these words, "And when He (Jesus) had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him." A day in the life of Jesus always meant dealing with lots of different people who followed Him for lots of different reasons. Some

were curious about Him. Some sought to derail Him. Some completely supported Him. Some simply wanted to be with Him.

Jesus had just delivered the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew 5,6 & 7. As He came down the mountain, Jesus encountered a man with leprosy. I have wondered if that man had been forbidden to be "on the mountain" to hear the message of Jesus because of his physical malady of leprosy. Lepers were

forced to live apart from others. They were commanded to be covered in sack cloth and ashes as though they were in a perpetual state of mourning for their "lost/dead" life. They were not allowed in worship settings or any other gatherings. They were considered unclean. To touch a leper would cause one to also be unclean.

I believe this desperate man was waiting for Jesus to come down his side of the mountain. He showed great faith that Jesus could make him well again

and restore him to his loved ones. There was one thing that this leper did not expect or even dare to anticipate: Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him. Scripture says that he was cleansed and healed immediately of leprosy.

See, I also believe that Jesus intentionally chose that particular foot path down the mountain. He knew exactly where that man was and what that man needed. That promiscuous woman of Sychar needed living water. Jesus stopped be-

side her water well. That penny pincher Zacchaeus needed repentance and forgiveness. Jesus stopped under-



Bible Studies for Life with Becky Brown

neath his sycamore tree.

Later, Jesus returned to Capernaum, the home base of His earthly ministry. As Jesus entered town, He was approached by a Roman military officer who was asking Jesus to heal his servant who was paralyzed and in pain and about to perish. This man was a centurion, a commander over 100 Roman soldiers. Jesus agreed to travel to the officer's home and

heal his servant. Since this centurion understood the power of authority and spoken commands, he believed that Jesus had authority to heal with only a word. This meant that the man trusted that with a spoken word from the mouth of Jesus, his servant would be completely healed, whether Jesus was present with the servant or not!

What does it take to AMAZE Jesus? The trust and confidence this centurion displayed gave Jesus an opportunity to bless such a demonstration of faith. Jesus told the centurion to return to his home and he would find his servant healed, ready and waiting to return to service. The report would return to Capernaum that during that very same hour, the servant was completely healed.

The leper was healed with a personal touch of the hand of Jesus. The centurion's servant was healed with a personal word from the mouth of Jesus. In scripture, leprosy is a metaphor for sinfulness. We are unclean and separate from Jesus. You and I are LEPEERS in need of the cleansing, healing touch of Jesus. You and I are paralyzed servants who wait for the healing word from the mouth of Jesus that allows us to become LEAPERS!

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland

RIDE

cont. from p. 1

"Saturday day riders are welcome at the rate listed above. You will need to be checked in

and ready to ride by 9 a.m.," Lum pointed out.

Lum said the trail ride is limited to 60 riders, and all riders under the age of 17 must be accompanied by an adult.

"I want to encourage participants to invite someone who has not yet ridden at Central Hills to join you for the Spring Trail Ride," he said. "It's going to be a great weekend of rid-

ing, fellowship, worship time, and devotional time."

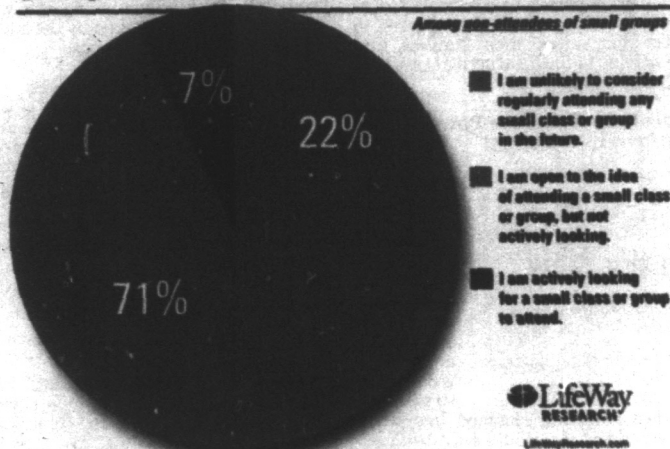
To register, contact Debbie Ramage at Central Hills Retreat. E-mail: dramage@mbcb.org. Telephone: (662) 289-9730. For

more information, contact Lum at dlum@mbcb.org. Telephone: (601) 292-3280.

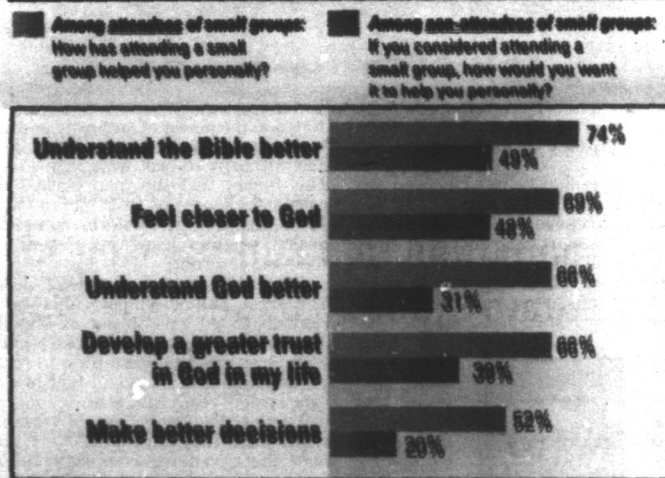
The Spring Trail Ride is funded in part by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

Small group Bible studies encouraged by LifeWay

Which best describes your attitude toward attending a small class or group through your church in the future?



Top 5 responses people give for how groups can help them



NASHVILLE (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville is challenging churches to start 100,000 new Bible study groups by the end of this year.

The new groups initiative is a partnership between churches, state conventions, and LifeWay. It's designed to help longtime churchgoers jump start their faith and to help new believers grow spiritually, said Bruce Raley, director of church education ministry for LifeWay.

Whether meeting on Sunday mornings or during the week, small groups are the best way to learn the habits of faith such as prayer, Bible study, and serving others, Raley said. "Discipleship takes place best in the context of a relationship, and relationships are most likely to develop in a small group."

So far, about 17,000 new groups have been registered at groupsmatter.com. The web site includes guides for starting new groups, resources for new leaders, and promotional materials.

Raley and other organizers say the new groups can be started at any point in the year, but they suggest the first Sunday in September as one of the best options.

That way, he said, churches can spend the summer months getting ready. "We believe thousands of new groups will kick off on that day."

The idea of starting 100,000 new groups began as a grassroots effort about three years ago when Bob Mayfield, a small groups expert at the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and some other state small groups leaders were having breakfast at a denominational meeting and talking about ways to draw more people into groups.

"We needed something dynamic — something our people could grab hold of," Mayfield said.

Not long afterward, Mayfield and the others met with Raley, who brought up the idea of starting 100,000 new groups as part of the Groups Matter campaign.

It was just what they needed to hear, Mayfield said. "This is something people have been waiting to do but nobody had said, 'This is what we are going to do.'"

The new initiative piggybacks on existing small group ministries that most churches already provide, Mayfield said. "It's the one strategy virtually all of our churches have — either they call it Sunday School, life groups or community groups. It's already the largest organization in most churches."

Small groups are often the most effective discipleship program. A study of 3,500 Protestant churchgoers in North America from LifeWay Research found that those who belong to a Bible study group are more likely to go to church at least four times a month (79%) and to read the Bible daily (28%).

The study showed being in a group helps participants feel closer to God (69%), under-

stand the Bible better (74%), and become more loving in their relationships (47%). Group members also develop deep friendships, often staying together for years.

The LifeWay Research study, which was published in a new book titled, *Transformational Groups*, found that half of current group attendees have been in the same group for at least two years. Twenty-seven percent have been in the same group for more than five years.

However, having tight-knit groups has a downside, Raley said. It's often hard for new people to join. "The reality is that many groups close after a few years. Relationships in a group go from being social to being personal. That's good for the group but bad for people trying to get in the door."

Launching new groups means more space for new people, Raley said. Mayfield agrees and observed that a good small group will form a tight social circle that's hard for newcomers to break into.

"In a new group, the social circle is wide open," Mayfield said.

That was the case for Tommy "TJ" Thresher of First Church in Moore, Ok. Being part of a small group has been crucial in helping him learn the Christian faith, he said.

Thresher, a sergeant in the Oklahoma National Guard, didn't grow up in a church-going family and had little interest in faith. In the summer of 2012, he said his wife decided to give church a try.

"She woke up one day and said, 'I'm going to church. You can go if you want to,'" he said.

Thresher did, and said he was hooked from the first Sunday. A few weeks later, he gave his life to Christ. That fall, he decided to help start a small group, which his church refers to as a "life group," on Sunday mornings with other newcomers to the church.

"The best way for a follower of Christ to learn is to really get in there with believers," he said.

Churches will find a welcome audience for new groups, according to LifeWay Research. The LifeWay small groups study found that many churchgoers who aren't part of a group are open to joining one.

Sixty-three percent of those not currently in a small group said they'd been part of one in the past. Most of those left their group either because of a change in their life situation (51%) or because the class ended (32%).

Among the types of changes in life situation that lead to no longer attending are family responsibilities (26%), general busyness (26%), or work responsibilities (25%) kept them from attending. Twenty-two percent said groups are offered at an inconvenient time.

Churches should offer groups at a variety of times and in a number of settings to attract as many people as possible, Raley says.

To find out more about the 100,000 groups initiative, log onto groupsmatter.com.

Miss. native tapped as interim Louisiana College president

PINEVILLE, La. (BP and local reports) — Louisiana College (LC) trustees have ended the often-controversial presidency of Joe Aguillard, voting in an April 15 meeting not to renew Aguillard's contract and naming Mississippi native Argile Smith, currently executive vice president for integration of faith and learning at the college, to serve as interim president effective Aug. 1.

Aguillard, LC's president since 2005, was accorded the

title of president emeritus and a tenured faculty position after a year's sabbatical.

The trustee action, as described by the Baptist Message state newspaper, followed "weeks of news reports that questioned Aguillard's leadership," including allegations of forged signatures on documents provided to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; embar-



SMITH

assing secret recordings of Aguillard by a former vice president; and a lawsuit filed against the president and the college.

Not everyone was pleased with the trustee's decision. Larry Hubbard, pastor of Riverside Church in Watson and a trustee, left early in the meeting and then resigned, telling The Town Talk newspaper, "I think it's a very

poor decision, wrong decision. Joe Aguillard needed to be removed... I was hoping for a national search to look for a college president with competence, integrity, and honesty."

Smith, who was born in Poplarville, serves not only as executive vice president for integration of faith and learning but also is associate dean of Christian Ministry in the Caskey School of Divinity and chair of the division of Christian studies. He holds the Lyndon

E. Dawson Professorship in Religion at the Pineville campus.

Smith completed Ph.D. and master of divinity degrees at New Orleans Seminary and holds an undergraduate degree from William Carey University in Hattiesburg.

He and his wife Connie, who have been married 38 years, have three married sons and one granddaughter.

Louisiana College is affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention.